

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows. Also, please cancel Claims 4-9 and 13-17 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter.

1. (Currently Amended) An ultrasonic transducer, comprising:  
a plurality of micro-machined ultrasonic transducer (MUT) elements formed on a first substrate, the first substrate including a first surface and a second surface; and  
a plurality of vias associated with each MUT element and extending entirely through the first substrate, where the vias reduce the propagation of acoustic energy traveling laterally in the first substrate.
2. (Original) The transducer of claim 1, wherein the vias are etched into the first substrate.
3. (Original) The transducer of claim 2, wherein the vias are etched into the first surface of the first substrate and the second surface of the first substrate.
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Cancelled)
7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) A method of reducing the lateral propagation of acoustic energy in an ultrasonic transducer, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a plurality of micro-machined ultrasonic transducer (MUT) elements on a first substrate, the first substrate including a first surface and a second surface; and

forming a plurality of vias proximate to each MUT element such that the vias extend entirely through the first substrate in order to reduce the propagation of acoustic energy traveling laterally in the first substrate.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the step of forming a plurality of vias includes [further comprising the step of] etching the vias into the first substrate.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10 [11], wherein the step of forming a plurality of vias includes [further comprising the step of] etching the vias into the first surface of the first substrate and the second surface of the first substrate.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)